

**To:** Bond, Brian[Bond.Brian@epa.gov]  
**From:** Purchia, Liz  
**Sent:** Thur 8/13/2015 4:49:40 PM  
**Subject:** FW: For coverage of Gold King Mine incident

Statement from Tuesday from Admin, statement from last night, readout from her trip to CO, NM.

This is a tragic and unfortunate incident, and EPA is taking responsibility to ensure that it is cleaned up. The most important thing throughout this is ensuring the health and safety of the residents and visitors near the river. We are committed to helping the people throughout the Four Corner Regions who rely on these rivers for their drinking water, irrigation water and recreation. We know how important it is to them.

As you may not know, there are thousands of abandoned mines throughout the West, and EPA routinely works with states to clean up these sites. The spill occurred when one of our contracting teams was using heavy equipment to enter the Gold King Mine, an inactive mine north of Durango, to begin the process of pumping and treating the contaminated water inside. In response to this unfortunate accident, we have deployed the full depth and breadth of the agency, with other partner agencies assisting.

It takes times to review and analyze data, but we have our researchers and scientists working around the clock. Our commitment is to get this right and protect public health. Thankfully, there have been no reported cases of anyone's health being harmed. Additionally, from initial sampling results, as the plume has advanced seeing elevated levels, and as it moves on, we are seeing a downward trajectory toward pre-event conditions.

EPA has taken steps to capture and treat the discharge at the Gold King mine, addressing the risk of additional downstream impacts. We have constructed four ponds at the mine site which are treating water by lowering acidity levels and removing dissolved metals.

We have also stood up a Unified Command center in Durango, as well as the Emergency Operations Center at EPA headquarters in DC to ensure a seamless coordinated response in conjunction with local, state and federal officials. Working with local officials, EPA is providing alternative water supplies and free water quality testing for domestic drinking water wells along the river. We have been in touch with the state leadership, as well as the Congressional delegations, and we have kept the White House informed.

EPA is an agency whose core mission is ensuring a clean environment and protecting public health, so it pains me to see this happening. But we are working tirelessly to respond and have committed to a full review of exactly what happened to ensure it cannot happen again.

#### **EPA Statement on Colorado Data from Gold King Mine Release**

DURANGO, CO - To assess the impacts of the release at the Gold King Mine near Silverton, Colorado, water quality samples were collected at numerous intervals beginning on Aug. 5, 2015. Samples were taken prior to the plume's arrival to establish a baseline for water quality comparisons. Each surface water sample was analyzed for 24 metals, including arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury.

Analysis now shows that water quality for the Animas River from the Silverton, Colo. area to the Durango municipal water intake has returned to pre-event water quality levels. These results are based on validated sampling data collected from Aug. 5 to Aug. 9, 2015.

EPA has shared this data with state, local and tribal officials in Colorado to assist them in their decisions regarding the on-going use of water resources. EPA plans to continue to monitor, analyze and share data for downstream river segments as it becomes available.

**From:** Purchia, Liz  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 13, 2015 12:02 PM  
**To:** Purchia, Liz  
**Subject:** For coverage of Gold King Mine incident

For folks covering the Gold King mine incident, we wanted to pass along a re-cap of Administrator McCarthy's Colorado visit yesterday and what today looks like.

McCarthy started her day yesterday with a meeting with Colorado Gov. Hickenlooper and Sen. Bennett. Over the course of the day she also spoke with Sen. Udall, Rep. Tipton, and Rep. Kirkpatrick. She also met with Rep. Lujan and toured a water sampling facility in Farmington, NM.

McCarthy also attended a briefing at the Unified EPA Area Command, visited with staff, and hosted a press briefing yesterday afternoon.

Last night EPA released from Aug. 5-9, which shows that water quality for the Animas River from the Silverton, Colo. area to the Durango municipal water intake has returned to pre-event water quality levels.

Regarding irrigation, EPA issued a \$500,000 work assignment on Monday for the delivery of water for irrigation and livestock in New Mexico. This service was previously being provided by San Juan County, NM and we are making deliveries. We understand the importance of the irrigation systems and are providing data to local jurisdictions to make informed decisions.

EPA plans to continue to monitor, analyze and share data for downstream river segments as it becomes available.

Data, trends and map here:<http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine/epa-statement-colorado-data-gold-king-mine-release>

Today, McCarthy began her day with a meeting with Navajo Nation President Begaye and his leadership team. This included a tour through the Navajo Nation and survey of the San Juan River.

McCarthy will also visit the Farmington, NM Incident Command Center, host a press availability, meet with officials from the San Juan Water Commission, and visit the Aztec Emergency Response Center.

We are working on audio and a readout from the press availability for those who can't attend in person.

Hope this is helpful for your coverage.